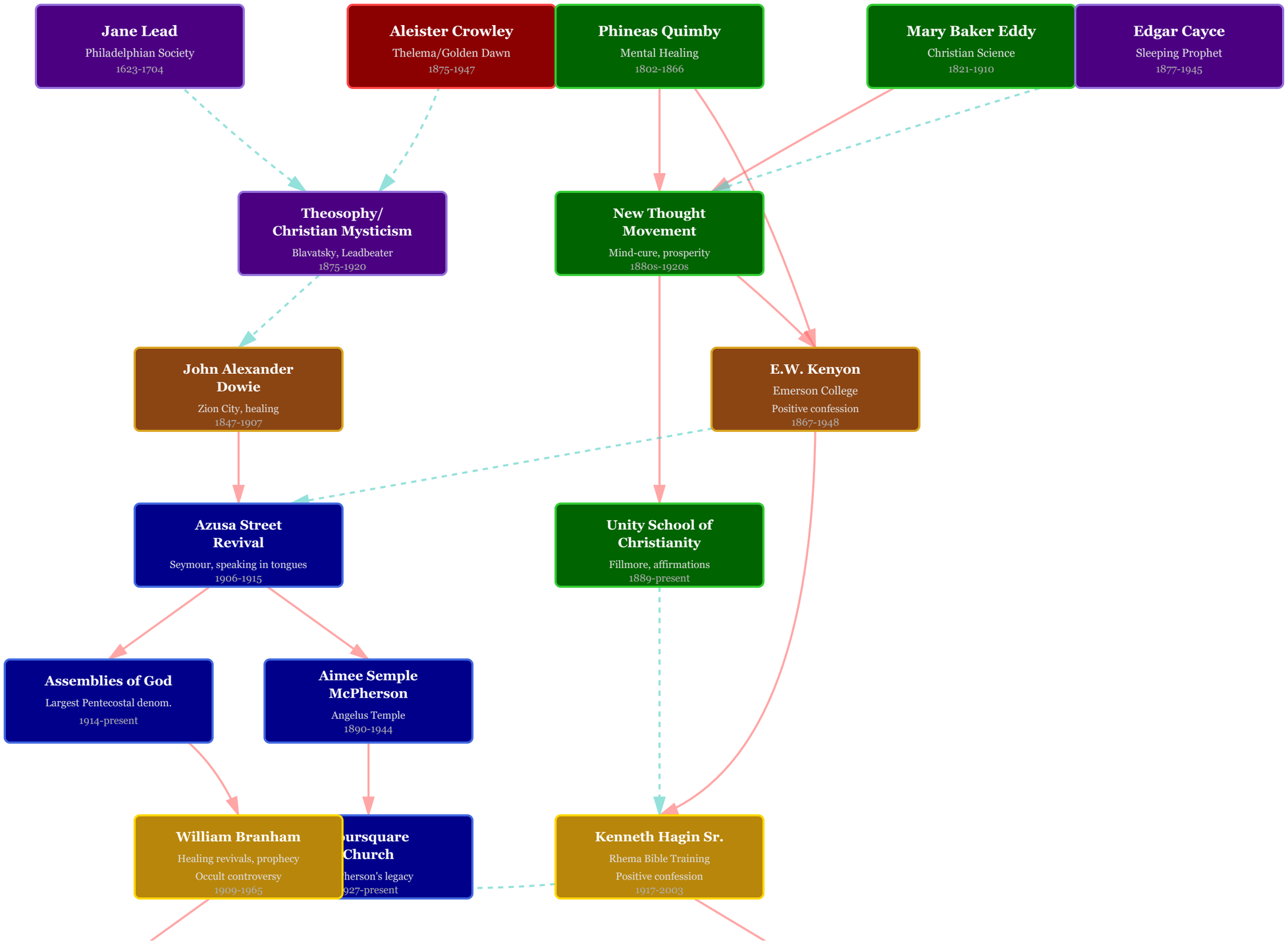
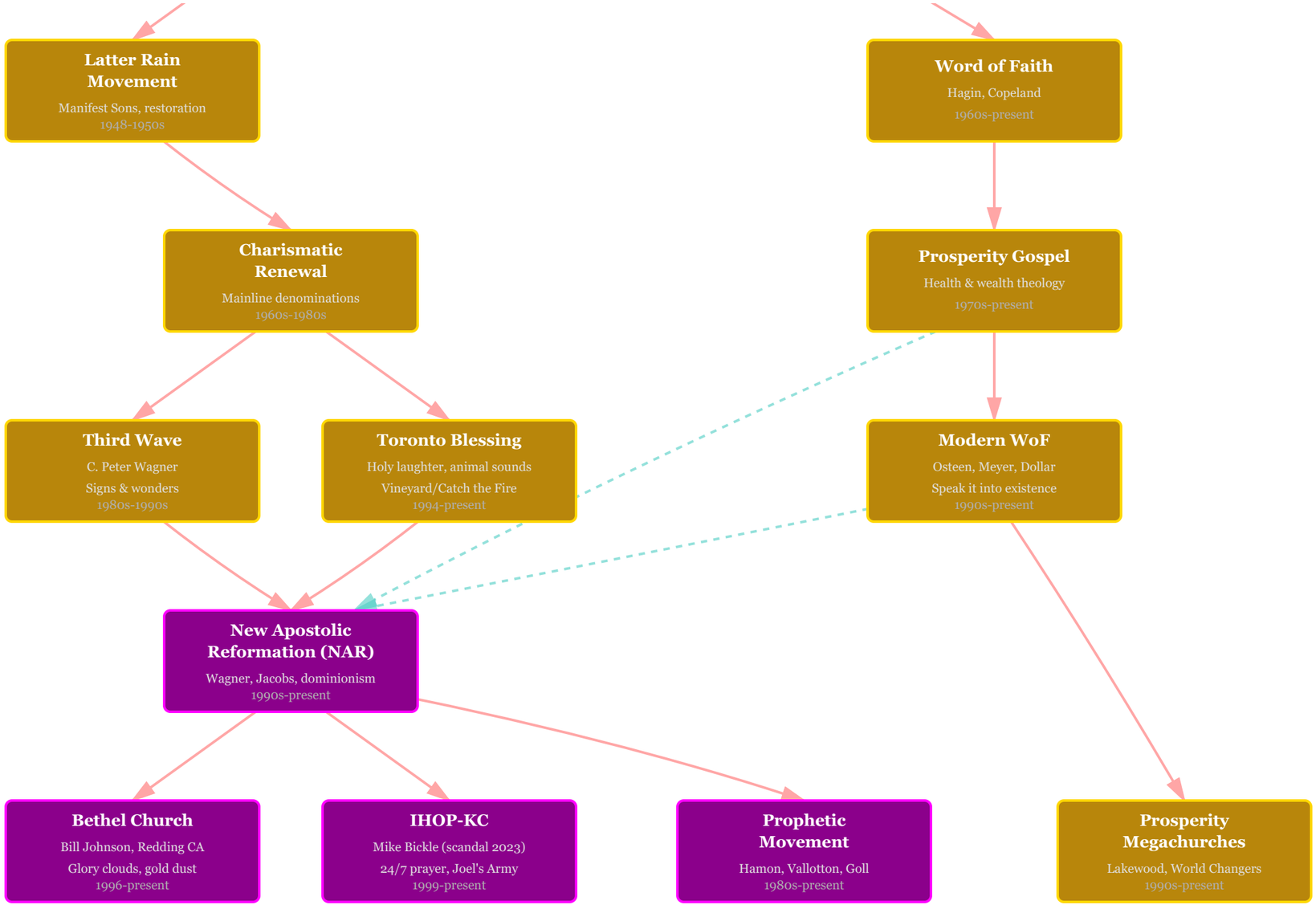
Esoteric & Occult Influences on Pentecostal/Charismatic Movements

Documented Connections and Theological Parallels (1650-2025)


Jane Lead
Philadelphian Society
1623-1704
Aleister Crowley
Thelema/Golden Dawn
1875-1947
Phineas Quimby
Mental Healing
1802-1866
Mary Baker Eddy
Christian Science
1821-1910
Edgar Cayce
Sleeping Prophet
1877-1945
Theosophy/
Christian Mysticism
Blavatsky, Leadbeater
1875-1920
New Thought
Movement
Mind-cure, prosperity
1880s-1920s
John Alexander
Dowie
Zion City, healing
1847-1907
E.W. Kenyon
Emerson College
Positive confession
1867-1948
Azusa Street
Revival
Seymour, speaking in tongues
1906-1915
Unity School of
Christianity
Fillmore, affirmations
1889-present
Assemblies of God
Largest Pentecostal denom.
1914-present
Aimee Semple
McPherson
Angelus Temple
1890-1944
William Branham
Healing revivals, prophecy
Occult controversy
1909-1965
ursquare
Church
herson's legacy
927-present
Kenneth Hagin Sr.
Rhema Bible Training
Positive confession
1917-2003



Legend

Categories:

- Occult/Ceremonial Magic
- Esoteric/Mysticism
- Metaphysical/New Thought
- Bridge Figures
- Pentecostal

Charismatic/Word of Faith NAR/Contemporary

Connection Types:

Direct/Documented Historical Connection Theological/Philosophical Parallel (dashed)

Key Theological & Philosophical Parallels

Mind-over-Matter Metaphysics: From Quimby's "mind cure" through New Thought to Kenyon's "positive confession" and modern Word of Faith teaching that words/thoughts create reality. This parallels New Thought's "Law of Attraction" with Christian terminology.

Divine Revelation & Gnosis: Jane Lead's mystical visions and direct revelation parallel the prophetic emphasis in NAR. Crowley's concept of channeling higher entities finds echoes in modern prophetic claims of direct divine downloads and revelatory knowledge.

Spiritual Manifestations: Edgar Cayce's trance states and physical manifestations during readings parallel Pentecostal "slain in the spirit," Toronto Blessing phenomena, and Bethel's glory clouds/gold dust.

Deification & Little Gods Doctrine: New Thought's teaching that humans are divine connects to Word of Faith's controversial "little gods" theology (promoted by Hagin, Copeland) - that believers are divine beings with creative power.

Documented Connections:

- **E.W. Kenyon** attended Emerson College of Oratory (1892-1893), a New Thought institution, where he was exposed to metaphysical teachings. His "positive confession" doctrine mirrors New Thought's affirmation practices.
- **William Branham** was influenced by occult practices including pyramidology, zodiac interpretation, and claimed angelic visitations that critics link to spiritist phenomena. His theology influenced the Latter Rain movement.
- **Kenneth Hagin** plagiarized extensively from E.W. Kenyon's writings, importing New Thought metaphysics into Charismatic Christianity.
- **C. Peter Wagner** coined the term "New Apostolic Reformation" and promoted dominionism, spiritual warfare, and apostolic authority - building on Latter Rain theology.

Prosperity Gospel Lineage: Direct theological line from Quimby's mental healing → New Thought prosperity teaching → Kenyon's faith formulas → Hagin's Word of Faith → modern prosperity preachers (Copeland, Dollar, Osteen).

NAR Synthesis: NAR represents a convergence of Latter Rain restorationism, Word of Faith metaphysics, Third Wave signs/wonders, Charismatic experientialism, and dominionist theology - creating a movement with theological roots in both Pentecostalism and metaphysical/esoteric thought.

Controversy Note: This chart represents documented historical connections and identified theological parallels. Critics of these movements point to these connections as evidence of unbiblical syncretism; defenders argue these are superficial similarities or that legitimate Christian experience was later corrupted by non-Christian movements.